

# ***Judicial Branch News***

***October, November, December 2007***

***Happy Holidays***



## ***Judicial Branch Employees Recognized***

Two Judicial Branch employees received employee recognition awards from the Supreme Court in October. The employees were honored for their commitment to public service and the Judiciary. The employees are Sarita Salinas and Pam Hunthausen.

The employees were selected by a committee of Judicial Branch employees from employees nominated by judges and other judiciary employees.



***Recognition award recipients pose with Chief Justice Karla Gray. From left: Sarita Salinas, Chief Justice Gray and Pam Hunthausen.***

*Sarita Salinas* is a juvenile probation officer with the 16<sup>th</sup> Judicial District in Miles City. Sarita is very thorough with her position and responsibilities – she is the epitome of organization. She works well with youth, parents, attorneys, school personnel and other professionals. She provides youth on her caseload with consistency and holds them accountable - leaving them better prepared to become productive members of society. Sarita also volunteers with youth outside work through church groups and as a counselor at a wilderness camp for youth. Sarita is a wonderful example of the quality juvenile probation officers we have in the Judicial Branch.

*Pam Hunthausen* is the Chief Justice's judicial assistant. Pam, who has served the court for 26 years, is professional, efficient, detail-oriented and approachable. She serves as the courts "hub" as she provides direct assistance to justices, law clerks and other judicial assistants. In the past year she spent countless hours working on the new case

management system. Her work was key to producing a useful case management system. Pam truly is a treasure – she is a superior performer and a joy to work with.

This is the fourth year that the court has honored exceptional Judicial Branch staff. The ceremony is held in the Supreme Court in Helena.

## ***State E-mail Reminder***

The State provided electronic mail (e-mail) system is to be used for: the conduct of state and local government business and delivery of government services; transmitting and sharing of information among governmental, research, and educational organizations; supporting open research and education in and between national and international research and instructional institutions; communicating and exchanging professional information; encouraging debate of issues in a specific field of expertise; applying for or administering grants or contracts; announcing requests for proposals and bids; announcing new services for use in research or instruction; and conducting other appropriate State business.

All messages created, sent or retrieved, over the state's systems are the property of the State of Montana. Privacy of e-mail is not guaranteed. Employees should not have expectations of privacy for any messages. System Administrators and management can monitor e-mail for performance, troubleshooting purposes, or if abuses are suspected. Employees should use their best judgment in sending confidential messages over the e-mail system. The use of encryption should be considered when sending these types of messages.

If you need assistance with the State e-mail system, please contact the Court Administrator Technology Help Desk at: 1-800-284-6017.



## *Self-Help Law Program Team Travels to Harvard*



A Montana team of (l-r) State Law Librarian Judy Meadows, District Court Judge Russ Fagg, Chief Justice Karla Gray, Self-Help Law Coordinator Tara Veazey, Judicial Educator Karen Sedlock and Justice of the Peace David Ortley traveled to a pro se litigant symposium at the Harvard Law School in November. The program allowed the Montana team to develop a training curriculum for judges, who deal with unrepresented litigants.

The self-help law program funded by the 2007 Legislature is off to a roaring start. In January, the first court-based self help law centers will open in Kalispell and Billings. In addition, the Montana Legal Services Association, with funding from the program, has hired a full-time attorney, who will be dedicated to forms development for pro se litigants. Finally, the program is accepting grant proposals to fund local programs. A full update on the progress of the Self-Help Law Program and a grant application for local programs is available at: [Montana Judicial Branch news](#)

## *Festival of Trees*

Staff in the 20<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Youth Court gathers around their **Griz** tree. Betty Hopkins, Linda Weaver, Suzette Wachal and Barbara Monaco decorated the tree for the Lake County Festival of Trees, which benefits the Lake County Youth Home. Ms. Monaco



and Ms. Weaver sit on the event board along with retired District Court Judge Diane Barz.



Sherri Rafter, Lois Menzies, Claudia Anderson and Karen Sedlock from the Court Administrator's Office show off the "McTree" from the Intermountain Festival of Trees. The tree, which was decorated by the Court Assessment Program in toys from McDonalds, was donated to the festival. The festival benefits the Intermountain Children's Home - residential treatment program for children.



## ***Budget Planning Begins Again***

The Office of Court Administrator (OCA) is in the initial stages of developing Judicial Branch budget proposals for next biennium. As part of this process, the OCA has asked District Court judges and chief juvenile probation officers to assess their current operations and identify and prioritize budget needs for fiscal years 2010 and 2011.

The OCA has provided an electronic form to be completed for each budget proposal. The form requests a description of and justification for each proposal as well as cost

and funding information. A proposal may be a request for additional funds to support an existing service or program or for funds for something that does not currently exist. Budget proposals must be submitted electronically to Becky Buska at [bbuska@mt.gov](mailto:bbuska@mt.gov) by **Friday, January 25, 2008**. If assistance is needed in calculating the cost of a proposal, Becky is available to help.

Once received, the OCA will compile and categorized the proposals, analyzed

them from a branch-wide perspective, and make recommendations to the Supreme Court regarding funding for the proposals. Proposals approved by the Court will be submitted to the Governor's Office of Budget and Program Planning and Legislative Fiscal Analyst, as required by law.

If you have any questions, please contact Lois Menzies at 841-2957 or [lmenzies@mt.gov](mailto:lmenzies@mt.gov) or Becky Buska at 444-2698 or [bbuska@mt.gov](mailto:bbuska@mt.gov).

### ***Welcome New Employees***

***Melissa Robbins***  
***3<sup>rd</sup> District JPO***

***Christopher McConnell***  
***5<sup>th</sup> District Law Clerk***

***Teddi Johannsen***  
***11<sup>th</sup> District Family Evaluator***

***Shaun Pisk***  
***13<sup>th</sup> District Youth Court***

***Jan Bjork***  
***18<sup>th</sup> District Court Admin***

***Stephanie Nowak***  
***18<sup>th</sup> District JA***

***Elizabeth Stuckey***  
***13<sup>th</sup> District Law Clerk***

***Debbie Benson***  
***20<sup>th</sup> District JA***

***Dineen Dawson***  
***Water Court Clerk***

***Kelly Elder***  
***Court Admin Office***

***Congratulations to long-time Judicial Branch employees Dorothy Bradley (18<sup>th</sup> District) and Barb Edgar (5<sup>th</sup> District), who will retire at the end of this year.***

## ***Phishing – What you Need to Know***

### **What is Phishing?**

Phishing is a form of identity theft where the intent is to steal your valuable personal data, such as credit card numbers, passwords, account data, or other information.

### **How Does It Work?**

A phisher will send you an email or an instant message. The message may appear to be from a friend, a business, a government agency or some other entity. Common phishing scams typically claim to be credit card companies, banks and major online retailers such as eBay, PayPal and Amazon. Some phishing attempts are easy to identify because they claim to come from businesses or companies that you have never dealt with; others may be more difficult to identify since they appear to be from entities with which you do business.

A phishing message may indicate that the entity had problems with

their computers or data and that they simply need to verify your account information so you won't be inconvenienced the next time you try to use their services. Or the email message might be that there has been a suspicious purchase made by your credit card. If you did not make this purchase, you need to "contact us by using this link."

Another example is a message claiming that you have just won the lottery, and if you would just go to this "secure" website and send them your bank account information, they'll put your winnings into your account. Another variation might be an email claiming to be from the IRS and due to an accounting error they just found, you have a refund. If you would just tell them your bank account number, they could process the refund.

Regardless of which story the phishers provide, they emulate a legitimate business or organization. The end result if you fall prey to phishing email may be unauthorized purchases using your credit card or

emptying out your bank or other financial account.

### **What Should I Watch For To Determine if an Email is a Phishing Email or Not?**

Does the email ask you to "verify your information" or to "confirm your user-id and password"?

Does the email reference any consequences should you not 'verify your information'?

Most important, remember that legitimate businesses should never ask for personal or financial information via email.

### **How Can I Avoid Becoming a Victim?**

If it appears to be a phishing email, simply delete it. You can also forward it to the company it claims to be from and to [spam@uce.gov](mailto:spam@uce.gov).

Do not click on any links listed in the email message and do not open any attachments contained in the email. Many phishing messages and sites not only attempt to get your personal information, they also attempt to

install malicious code, like a Trojan horse, on to your computer.

Do not enter personal information in a pop-up screen. Legitimate companies, agencies and organizations don't ask for personal information via pop-up screens.

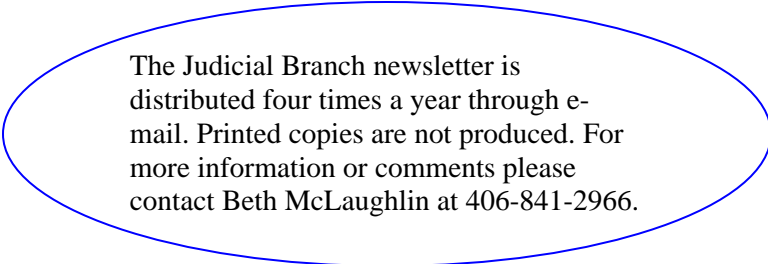
Install a phishing filter on your email application and also for your web browser. These filters will not keep out all phishing messages, but it will reduce the numbers of phishing attempts.

**Anything else I should do?**

Review your credit card and bank statements or bills from the companies you do business with, looking for unauthorized charges or withdrawals.

**For more monthly tips visit:**

[www.msisac.org/awareness/news/](http://www.msisac.org/awareness/news/)



The Judicial Branch newsletter is distributed four times a year through e-mail. Printed copies are not produced. For more information or comments please contact Beth McLaughlin at 406-841-2966.